

MDHE Policy Guidance

The items below are meant to outline MDHE issues and policy questions that were foundational to the creation of LAMP. These are the issues upon which MDHE seeks input and information in the form of the LAMP report to the Commissioner for Higher Education. These issues are meant to serve as a lens through which LAMP's tasks and goals are to be chosen. Note that the policy priorities to address first are listed under number 2, items a, b, and c; the remaining policy issues will need to be addressed, but the department recognizes that it is necessary to identify priorities for directing resources.

1. Articulation of Guiding Principles for a statewide Post-secondary Assessment Policy

- a. Building upon prior statewide collaborative work on assessment (Missouri Assessment Consortium's "Guiding Principles on Assessment" and its accompanying Assessment Handbook) LAMP will articulate a comprehensive set of guiding principles addressing issues related specifically to statewide assessment practices and policy. These principles will be used to make recommendations about the role of MDHE in assessment across the state, definitions of different forms and purposes of assessment and their relationship to state policy.

2. LAMP's charge highlights the capacity of assessment to foster student learning, establish foundation for a culture of continuous improvement, and provide ways to demonstrate accountability. In the decentralized post-secondary educational environment, assessment provides an efficient and effective means of establishing academic trust among institutions, facilitating student transfer and ensuring educational quality. This process recognizes multiple opportunities for assessment to provide useful information along the path of an educational career. Reflective of the guiding principles, assessment at each transition point must ask questions related to purpose, audience, methods, and the role of the state and statewide collaboration, etc. LAMP is charged to create policy recommendations related to each point of transition.

a. Access and Placement (Preparation)

SB 389 recognizes a need for post-secondary institutions to establish expectations of student academic competencies (skills and knowledge) in order to succeed at collegiate level coursework. Through the Curriculum Alignment Initiative entry-level competencies for many areas have created criteria for access to college. Assessment related questions concerning how to determine attainment of these competencies need to be addressed.

Potential Questions/Issues

What essential entry competencies important to access and college readiness have yet to be addressed by CAI?

How can we best assess the entry-level competencies for entering postsecondary students?

What still needs to be done to align CAI Entry Level Competencies with DESE educational assessment standards like Course Level Expectations (CLE)?

In cases where CLEs are adequately aligned with entry-level competencies, are the End-of-Course examinations (EOC) of the CLEs sufficient to assess for access to postsecondary coursework?

What kinds of supplemental assessment are required if EOC's not sufficient and/or for exceptions like late transfer students, out-of-state students, advancement from remediation/developmental coursework to college level etc.?

Are competencies required across the board for all subject areas for access to any collegiate-level coursework or is performance considered on a subject by subject basis?

How do we ensure that Dual Credit students meet the same expectations as other students?

b. Beginning General Education Course Transfer

SB 389 addressed concerns regarding the transfer of single beginning general education courses for collegiate credit for those students not transferring with the 42-hour block of articulated credit or an associate's degree. Assessment related questions regarding the appropriate certification of credit given the development of course-based exit-level competencies in CAI need to be addressed

Potential Questions/Issues

What are advantages/disadvantages of statewide exam in beginning general education courses?

What grading policies and procedures would have to be in place for grades to demonstrate achievement of exit competencies?

How can we respect institutional autonomy while ensuring the transfer of knowledge and skills, not just the transfer of credit?

Are there ways to "tune" learning goals or curriculum across the state so that grades might be sufficient demonstration of exit competencies mastery?

c. College level General Education

Assessment of general education competencies attainment provides a significant opportunity for intervention to promote student success, accountability to public stakeholders, and trust among institutions to facilitate transfer and articulation. LAMP is charged to develop a strategy that 1) enriches institutional practices which provide useful feedback for student and course improvement, 2) assures correspondence of student learning achievement across institutions, and 3) provides meaningful demonstrations of associated student learning for the public.

Potential Questions/Issues

What do we mean by general education (e.g., first two years of college, foundational content knowledge and cognitive skills, liberal education) what do we want to test for?

What are effective means of assessing general education for improvement of student learning that may also serve purposes of accountability reporting and institutional benchmarking?

What assessment policies and practices are necessary to facilitate transfer of credit (1) in courses where specific exit competencies have been specified, (2) in courses where specific exit competencies have not been specified, and (3) in the case of the 42-hour block?

d. Major Fields

Assessment in major fields ensures that institutions in Missouri are maintaining alignment with their fields of specialization, adequately preparing students to enter their chosen profession, and providing good stewardship of state resources.

Potential Questions/Issues

What kinds of reporting will provide sufficiently useful information for public policy as indicated in Imperatives for Change? What kinds of reporting and collaborative assessment and course configuration might extend beyond the IFC requirements.

e. Licensure and Certification

Results of licensure and certification also serves to prove good stewardship of state resources and indication that students are prepared to enter fields with criterion-referenced licensure.

Potential Questions/Issues

Are licensures and certificates comparable across fields? What is viable reporting?

How do we gain more data from outside licensure programs?

What kinds of reporting will provide sufficiently useful information for public policy as indicated in Imperatives for Change? What kinds of reporting and collaborative assessment and course configuration might extend beyond the IFC requirements.

f. Graduate level Access, Admission and Completion

Missouri higher education has a significant interest in producing undergraduates ready for graduate study. Many assessment issues related to undergraduate access and completion may be related to graduate transition point as well.

Potential Questions/Issues

Other than GRE Scores what kinds of assessments and reporting might inform the preparedness of undergraduates for graduate study?

g. Workforce Competency

Imperatives for Change asks for assessments of collegiate graduate performance in the workplace. Workplace assessments provide useful information to benchmark program content and student achievement with the knowledge and skills required by employers.

Potential Questions/Issues

What kinds of reporting will provide sufficiently useful information for public policy as indicated in Imperatives for Change? What kinds of reporting and collaborative assessment and course configuration might extend beyond the IFC requirements.

What kinds of useful feedback for institutions and programs, recent graduates, and state reporting would be helpful?

- 3. Encourage and facilitate qualitative advancement of institution specific assessment practices through collaborative conferences, seminars, pilot projects, benchmark data collection and dissemination etc.**
- 4. Provide for a strategy for further review of assessment policy and evaluation of assessment practices across the state.**